

Mark Schafer
National Research Council
Washington, D.C.

3 December 1952

Dear General:

First of all I would like you to know that I am writing to you as a private individual, speaking for no organization or group, and second, that my motives are none other than a sincere preoccupation with the security and well-being of this great country of ours.

As I do not wish to waste your valuable time, I shall come straight to the point: I am an American citizen of European birth. Having been raised and educated on the French-German border, I acquired the advantageous capacity of speaking both German and French with equal fluency and without accent, while at the same time I was able to study the English language, first in a German High School, and later right here in this country in High School and College at Syracuse, New York.

This talent came in handy during the last war when I joined MIS to become an interrogator of prisoners of war. Afterwards I did research and translation work for the Nuernberg trials and thereafter completed three years of study of international relations at a special school in Geneva, Switzerland.

Before returning to the U.S. in March of this year, I had considerable opportunity to travel throughout Western Europe, particularly Germany, France, Italy and Switzerland. Though it was not part of any official duties I had to fulfill, I have always taken delight in mingling with the ordinary people of these coun-

tries, particularly when they did not know I was an American and so took me for one of their own. In this way I was able to listen to the opinions of the broad masses of the European peoples on such interesting subjects as their conception of America, the relations between Europe and America, what they thought of the Marshall Plan, how they stood on Communism, Russia and Soviet propaganda, what they thought of the voice of America, if they listened to it etc.

One of the most curious things I found out in this way, and which I believe is very important to the people of Central Intelligence is the wide discrepancy which exists between the opinions expressed by editorial writers in the columns of the leading European newspapers, or the phrases ~~uttered~~ uttered by leading European politicians, and the opinions current among the masses of the people as expressed when they thought no one was listening. Another interesting thing was that the minute they found out I was an American, their opinions on various political matters would suddenly change. They would tone down their criticism of the Marshall Plan, minimize the importance of Communism in their country and tell me, with a slap on the back, that of course they were all so appreciative of America's help and that everything would work out ~~just~~ fine. Usually it was only a short time before that I heard these same people express the opinion, for example, that both America and Russia were two great villains and that Europe should let the two giants fight it out among themselves without taking sides. This opinion is far more widespread in Europe than our own press has recognized.

Of course, I realize that I am not really telling you anything new. You are, no doubt, aware of all these things. But the reason I am taking up your valuable time here is for the following suggestion I would like to make, if in fact your organization is not

already operating on that very principle. From previous experience with intelligence work I know that the men in the field always place great emphasis on what the local papers are saying about this or that subject of interest to our country, and that they probably try to "sound out" the leading politicians to find out what they are thinking. The men back in Washington evaluate this information. But, in the light of what I have seen in Europe, I doubt seriously whether from these sources alone a complete and accurate picture can be obtained. How would it be if the Central Intelligence Agency were to send abroad a few people with backgrounds similar to mine, to do over there just what I did these past 7 years as a mere sport, that is to have them mingle with the common folks in Berlin or Paris or Madrid or wherever it may be, listen to what the people have to say in the beer halls or cafés or at public gatherings, and do as little talking and as much listening as possible. Their reports to Washington would constitute an invaluable third source of information which could be balanced against the information obtained from newspaper accounts or European public officials, likely unaware of the shakiness of their own position.

I do hope that I have not taken up your time uselessly with this letter and that you do not consider it presumptuous on my part to make a suggestion of this sort, which, for all I know may be superfluous. I assure you, dear General Smith, that this letter was prompted by the highest of motives. I am not a member of your organization, but am employed elsewhere and quite satisfied with my job. If, for any reason, you or one of your men should like to get in touch with me, I can be reached at the National Research Council during the day, tel. Executive 8100, ext. 120.

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Please accept my sincerest consideration of respect

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